

CLAIMS:

We claim:

1. A systems administration policy enforcement method comprising the steps of:  
responsive to a request to perform an administrative task directed to a resource within a computing network, retrieving an administration policy comprising a set of rules for governing said administrative task, further retrieving state data for said resource and applying said retrieved policy to said retrieved state data; and,  
permitting said administrative task only if said further retrieved state data satisfies said set of rules in said retrieved policy.
  
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
providing a user interface for establishing said set of rules for said administration policy; and,  
storing said administration policy for subsequent retrieval in said retrieving step.
  
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
yet further retrieving environmental information for the computing network; and,  
further permitting said administrative task only if said yet further retrieved environmental data satisfies said set of rules in said retrieved policy.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said step of further retrieving said state data, comprises retrieving state data both for said resource and also for other related resources in said computing network.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:  
disallowing said administrative task if said further retrieved state data fails to satisfy said set of rules in said retrieved policy;  
identifying a related resource having a related resource state giving rise to said state data for said resource failing to satisfy said set of rules in said retrieved policy;  
requesting remediation of said related resource state so that said related resource state satisfies said set of rules in said retrieved policy; and,  
further permitting said administrative task subsequent to a remediation of said related resource state.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein said steps of disallowing, identifying, requesting and further permitting are performed autonomically.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein said steps of disallowing, identifying, requesting and further permitting are performed recursively for each related resource whose state gives rise to a failure of said resource to satisfy said retrieved policy.

8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of inserting an exit routine in an administration console of said resource, said exit routine having a configuration for forwarding requests to administer said resource to a policy evaluation component programmed to perform said steps of retrieving, further retrieving, applying and permitting.
9. A system administration policy enforcement system comprising:
  - an administration policy comprising a set of rules for permitting and disallowing administration of resources in a system hosting a plurality of interdependent resources;
  - a policy evaluation component configured to retrieve resource state data and determine whether said retrieved resource state data satisfies said set of rules in said administration policy; and,
  - an exit routine coupled to a resource in said network, said exit routine having logic for forwarding requests to administer said resource to said policy evaluation component.
10. The system of claim 9, further comprising a rules engine coupled to said policy evaluation component and configured to retrieve said set of rules on behalf of said policy evaluation component.

11. A machine readable storage having stored thereon a computer program for enforcing a systems administration policy, said computer program comprising a routine set of instructions for causing the machine to perform the steps of:

responsive to a request to perform an administrative task directed to a resource within a computing network, retrieving an administration policy comprising a set of rules for governing said administrative task, further retrieving state data for said resource, and applying said retrieved policy to said retrieved state data; and,

permitting said administrative task only if said further retrieved state data satisfies said set of rules in said retrieved policy.

12. The machine readable storage of claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

providing a user interface for establishing said set of rules for said administration policy; and,

storing said administration policy for subsequent retrieval in said retrieving step.

13. The machine readable storage of claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

yet further retrieving environmental information for the computing network; and,

further permitting said administrative task only if said yet further retrieved environmental data satisfies said set of rules in said retrieved policy.

14. The machine readable storage of claim 11, wherein said step of further retrieving said state data, comprises retrieving state data both for said resource and also for other related resources in said computing network.

15. The machine readable storage of claim 11, further comprising the steps of: disallowing said administrative task if said further retrieved state data fails to satisfy said set of rules in said retrieved policy;

identifying a related resource having a related resource state giving rise to said state data for said resource failing to satisfy said set of rules in said retrieved policy;

requesting remediation of said related resource state so that said related resource state satisfies said set of rules in said retrieved policy; and,

further permitting said administrative task subsequent to a remediation of said related resource state.

16. The machine readable storage of claim 15, wherein said steps of disallowing, identifying, requesting and further permitting are performed autonomically.

17. The machine readable storage of claim 15, wherein said steps of disallowing, identifying, requesting and further permitting are performed recursively for each related resource whose state gives rise to a failure of said resource to satisfy said retrieved policy.

18. The machine readable storage of claim 11, further comprising the step of inserting an exit routine in an administration console of said resource, said exit routine having a configuration for forwarding requests to administer said resource to a policy evaluation component programmed to perform said steps of retrieving, further retrieving, applying and permitting.